Environmental Assessment
MEPA, NEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. **Type of proposed state action**: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes to initiate a campground improvement project within Salmon Lake State Park, which would include the asphalt paving of the interior campground road and spurs and the installation of electrical pedestals at all the campsites.

2. **Agency authority for the proposed action:** The 1977 Montana Legislature enacted statute 87-1-605, which directs Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) to acquire, develop and operate a system of state parks.

State statue 23-1-110 MCA and ARM 12.2.433 guides public involvement and comment for the improvements at state parks and fishing access sites, which this document provides.

4. **Construction Timeline:**
Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: Spring or Fall 2010 depending upon conditions within the park
Estimated Completion Date: within the same as commencement timeframes
Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 10%

5. **Location:**
Salmon Lake State Park is located in Missoula County, T16N R14W S32 and T15N R14W S5.

Area map showing the location of Salmon Lake State Park.

6. Project size:

	Acres		Acres
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain	0
Residential	0		
Industrial	0	(e) Productive:	
		Irrigated cropland	0
(b) Open Space/Woodlands/Recreation	5	Dry cropland	0
		Forestry	0
(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas	0	Rangeland	0
		Other	0

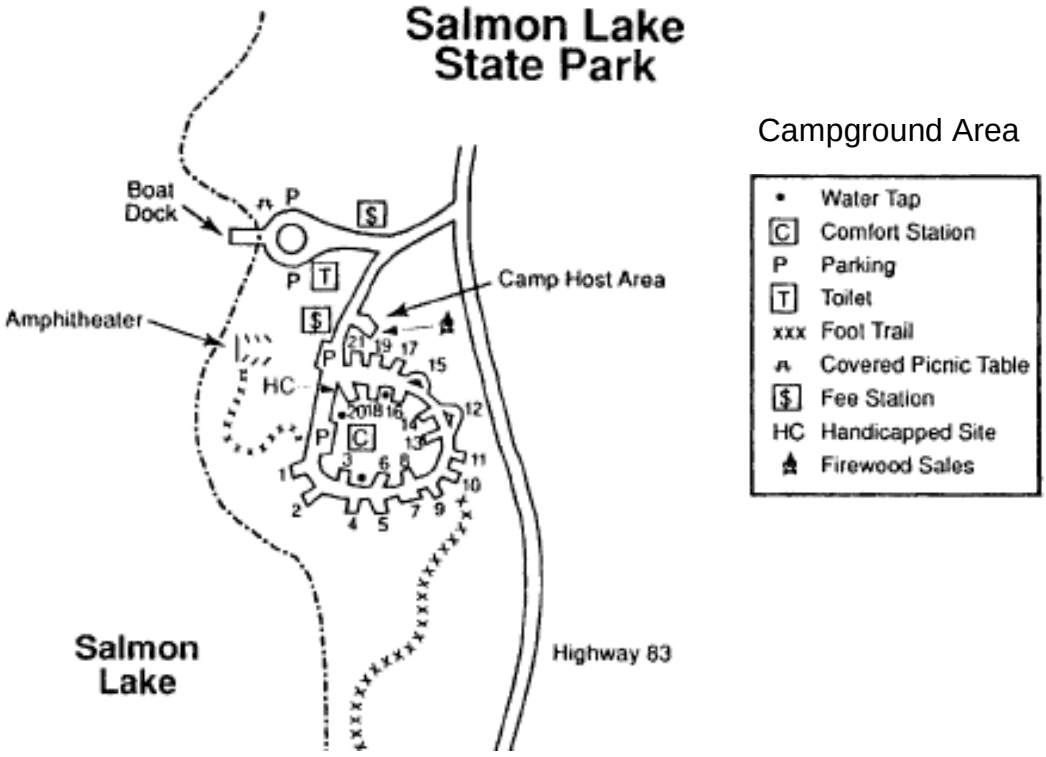
7. Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.

(a) Permits:
State Electrical Permit secured by contractor.

(b) Funding:
FWP $260,000

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:
Montana State Historic Preservation Office – cultural and historic resources
MT Dept. of Environmental Quality – Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan

8. Narrative summary of the proposed action:
Salmon Lake State Park is a 42-acre park along the beautiful Clearwater River chain of lakes in western Montana. The park includes a day-use area with a boat-launch, latrines, picnic areas, and parking area; and a separate campground area with 23 public camping sites, a campground host camp pad, shower and restroom facilities, an amphitheater, and hiking trails connecting the two areas. The park is extremely popular, with approximately 35,000 visitors annually. The park is open May 1st through September 30th.



Proposed Interior Road Improvements

The popularity of the park and the corresponding number of vehicles in the park has been an issue for several years. Currently, the majority of the campground road surface is gravel with a low percentage of clay in the gravel to act as a binder to keep the road surface stable and compacted (Figure 1). During the summer peak use season when the road surface becomes dry, the park road generates tremendous clouds of dust with every passing vehicle, especially in the campground loop and park entrance area. This dust covers everything with a fine layer of dirt--people, food, campers, and other camping gear (Figure 2). Visitors enjoy this beautiful park, but complain earnestly about the amount of dust they encounter. The dust not only detracts from visitors' experiences, but also under extreme conditions can create safety hazards such as low visibility and health issues for people with any type of respiratory distress. The current gravel/organic road surface also generates mud during inclement weather, which can make the campground loop difficult for maneuvering towing vehicles.

Figure 1. Existing gravel road in Salmon Lake SP.

Figure 2. Photo showing popularity of Salmon Campground with RVs.

FWP has attempted to reduce the dust and particulate level at the park for years, with limited success. FWP has applied magnesium chloride (MgCl) to the interior road surface as dust abatement for the past seven years, but this compound requires some humidity to be effective, and there is minimal moisture in the air in the peak of the summer season when dust abatement is needed the most. In addition to the effectiveness of the MgCl, it is negatively affecting young trees along park roads (Figure 3), and leaching of the chemical is contributing to higher mortality of mature trees within the park when combined with drought and insect attack (bark beetle).

Figure 3. Photo of young pine tree killed by magnesium chloride.

Creating a hardened road surface within the campground loop would considerably decrease airborne particulates from vehicles, which would significantly improve air quality and visitor experience. Paving would also allow speed bumps to be installed where needed, and for the lining and striping of the parking areas. Motorized vehicles are restricted to a 5-m.p.h. speed limit, however some two-wheeled and four-wheeled motorized vehicles are driven above that limit, which can create a public safety problem. The delineation of parking areas and spots will

allow the more efficient use of the park's developed space and reduce conflicts such as vehicles parked on vegetation or in the path of other vehicles.

In the fall of 2007, FWP improved the day-use portion of this state park by paving the interior road and striping the parking lot for the boat ramp and picnic areas. Since then, park staff have received many compliments for the paving from visitors noting how much more efficient the small parking lot has become because of the delineations and how comfortable it is to walk between the picnic benches and boat ramp on asphalt compared to gravel.

In 2007, FWP paved the interior roads at nearby Placid Lake State Park. Like Salmon Lake State Park, Placid Lake State Park was plagued with dust movement and generation within its campgrounds by the movement of campers and other vehicles. The level of dust was often noted and the topic of complaints to park staff. After the completion of the road paving at Placid Lake State Park, overall visitor satisfaction was higher, and park staff reported receiving many compliments from campers on FWP's paving project. FWP anticipates the same positive response if the proposed paving at Salmon Lake State Park occurs.

Electrification Project

FWP proposes to install electrical pedestals for campers at Salmon Lake State Park's campground, based on demand identified in a 2006 user survey at the park. Over 50% of overnight visitors use motor homes or full-size travel trailers for their accommodations, and almost all would like to have the option of on-site electricity. Many visitors (RV and tent campers) complain that noise from generators used in the park is excessive and detracts from their experience. Quiet hours in the park are set for 10 p.m. until 7 a.m. when campers are expected to turn off equipment that contribute to nuisance noise in the campground for the benefit of all campers in the park.

The design of the proposed electrification project is such that all utility connections will be underground with only the pedestals visible at the campsites. This design will limit the intrusion of man-made objects to the natural environment of the park. The trenching of the conduits will require some disturbance of native vegetation and road crossings, which is why all electrical work would be completed before beginning paving work in the campground. FWP is planning to limit trenching within 10-15 feet of mature trees whenever possible to limit potential impact to them. (See Part II for a more in-depth discussion of potential impacts.) Preliminary designs include the installation of a new transformer and electrical panel to upgrade the electrical infrastructure to required levels in order to support the pedestals. These new structures will be placed in locations so as not to detract from the natural quality of the environment.

The addition of individual electrical campsite pedestals will allow campers to enjoy their electrical comforts (medical equipment, A/C, TV, and recharging cell phones and boating items) without the use of their generators, which is expected to considerably increase visitor satisfaction.

In 2007, an electric pedestal for the ADA (American with Disabilities Act) compliant campsite was installed at Salmon Lake State Park. This amenity has been very well received and many campers without any need for the ADA accessible campsite request the site for the sole purpose of utilizing the electricity. The addition of other campsite pedestals will eliminate occupancy requests for this designated ADA site.

In addition to providing new service for campers, the option for campers to utilize onsite electricity versus using their gasoline generators would reduce the nuisance noise and odors throughout the site.

FWP experiences from previous campground electrification efforts have shown that some campers do appreciate the opportunity to use campsite pedestals instead of individual generators. Prior to 2007, there were no state parks providing campers the opportunity to utilize electricity for powering medical equipment, camper comforts, or recharging boating or other equipment. Feedback through visitor satisfaction surveys completed at the Cooney, Hell Creek, and Tongue River Reservoir State Parks, in addition to visitor comment cards, showed there was a contingent of campers that desired electricity within the campgrounds. Of the 110 visitor comment cards FWP received in 2005 at Hell Creek, 39 visitors asked if pedestals could be added to the park's facilities. The visitor survey completed at Tongue River Reservoir in 2007 reflected that 62% or respondents felt that electrical hookups at some of the campsites were important or very important. After the pedestals were installed at Cooney, Hell Creek, and Tongue River Reservoir State Parks, comment cards and comments given directly to park staff reflected that many campers appreciated the campground improvements and the opportunity to plug in instead of using their own generators. Now, those electrified sites have become the preferred sites for many visitors. This success is also expected to be seen at Salmon Lake State Park.

PART II. ALTERNATIVES

1. Alternative A: No Action

If no action is taken, the interior park roads and parking areas within Salmon Lake State Park campground would not be paved, and as a secondary part of that project, electric pedestals would not be provided at the campsites. This alternative would not resolve the issues impacting public health and safety or natural resource protection. The roads will continue to generate high levels of dust during the summer season, causing irritation and discomfort to park visitors and workers, sometimes severe. The gravel surface also prohibits permanent road paint from being applied, which causes inefficient parking, driver confusion, and contributes to some instances of speeding violations.

If electrical service is not provided as an option, noise from generators will continue to be high, which detracts from the recreational experiences of campers. If no action is taken, the public will continue to register concerns and complaints about the lack of on-site electricity and the road and parking conditions in Salmon Lake State Park.

2. Alternative B: Pave all interior road and parking surfaces in the campground and install electrical pedestals at 23 public campsites

This is the preferred alternative. The electric pedestals would be installed prior to the paving of the campground. The campground road and parking spurs would be paved with a 2" lift of asphalt. Trenching and installing the pedestals before paving the interior road and spurs will ensure resurfacing of trenching across the road's path is not necessary and costs of the improvements are kept within budget. Additionally, if the two improvements are implemented in progression of one another, inconveniences to visitors will be kept to a minimum.

3. Alternative C: Only pave interior road surfaces

Like the preferred alternative, FWP would proceed with plans to pave all interior road and parking surfaces within the park. In this Alternative, roads and campground spurs would be

paved; however, no electric pedestals would be installed. This alternative is not preferred as it would be much more efficient to install the underground utility infrastructure and electrical pedestals prior to paving. Public interest in electric hook ups is not likely to diminish, and returning later to install electric hookups after the roads are paved would add significantly to the cost of the project.

4. Alternative D: Only install electrical pedestals at the 23 public campsites

In this Alternative, the electric infrastructure and pedestals would be installed; however, the roads and parking spurs would remain gravel. This alternative would be less expensive than Alternative B, but dust and associated road and parking issues would remain.

PART III. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

If the No Action Alternative were chosen, FWP would continue to provide existing services and maintenance to the campground loop and associated areas. The use of MgCl would likely continue to be applied to existing graveled areas to decrease the amount of dust generated within the campground, and the use of this chemical will continue to contribute to the deteriorating health of adjacent conifers and other vegetation.

Issues currently faced by park staff, such as management of parking and traffic hazards within the loop and oversight of the use of RV generators during quiet hours, will continue to challenge staff into the future.

1. Evaluation of the impacts of Alternative B, since Alternatives C and D are included within that option.

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. LAND RESOURCES **Will the proposed action result in:**	**IMPACT ***				**Can Impact Be Mitigated ***	**Comment Index**
	Unknown *	**None**	**Minor ***	**Potentially Significant**		
a. **Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?			X		Yes	1a
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?		X				1b
c. **Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				1c
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				1d
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				

1a/c. No unique geologic features would be destroyed, covered, or modified by the proposed action.

1b. Soil structure and permeability should be improved by curtailing the use of magnesium chloride (MgCl) for dust control. MgCl is a salt, which changes soil structure and can inhibit moisture uptake by plants. Surfacing the road should eliminate the need for dust abatement, and the salts applied in past years should eventually leach away from the soil and root zone.

The design of the proposed project will require the digging of trenches for all the infrastructure improvements, as well as for the conduits connecting each of the pedestals to one another and to the electrical panel. The trenches are expected to be 24" in depth and approximately 10" in width to accommodate a 3" conduit and necessary fill material. After the installation of the conduits is complete, the disturbed soils will be replaced and compacted so that natural understory vegetation can be reestablished.

1d. The road system in the park drains into predominantly vegetated areas. Surfacing the road is unlikely to cause any changes in sedimentation or drainage patterns into Salmon Lake. Distances from the campground loop road to the edge of the lake range from approximately 225 feet to over 500 feet.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

2. AIR **Will the proposed action result in:**	**IMPACT ∗**				**Can Impact Be Mitigated ∗**	**Comment Index**
	Unknown ∗	**None**	**Minor ∗**	**Potentially Significant**		
a. ∗∗Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (Also see 13 (c).)			X positive			2a
b. Creation of objectionable odors?			X positive			2b
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. ∗∗∗For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge, which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a.)		N/A				

2a. Paving should dramatically reduce dust from the road. This would significantly improve air quality in the general vicinity of the campground road during the summer season. Particulates (dust) from vehicle traffic on the road currently create health and safety issues on the road and an unpleasant experience for park visitors. Minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions will be created by heavy equipment during construction, but would end after completion of the project.

2b. Providing electrical service to campsites would reduce the use of generators, which can create objectionable petroleum-based odors.

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3. WATER Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. *Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?			X		yes	3a
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			X		yes	3b
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c.)		N/A				
m. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a.)		N/A				

3a. It is possible that the proposed project would result in a small discharge of sediment into adjacent surface water during construction and paving. FWP would ensure that Best Management Practices (BMPs) were employed during construction to minimize that risk.

3b. Run-off patterns from water leaving the road surface may be altered by the project in some areas. BMPs would be used during paving to mitigate any sediment entering the lake. BMPs can include but are not limited to, constructing gravel bars to trap sediment, sediment fencing, directing run off into vegetative zones, and developing sediment catch basins.

Paving will help all erosion and runoff issues by controlling where surface water is directed.

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4. VEGETATION Will the proposed action result in?	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X		Yes	4a
b. Alteration of a plant community?			X		Yes	4b
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				4c
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?		X				4e
f. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		N/A				

4a/b. The proposed electrical work will require the disturbance and/or removal of some grasses, forbs, and small shrubs within the path of the conduit trench. The design will attempt to minimize disturbance by running lines along roadways whenever possible. No mature trees will be removed. To minimize potential impacts caused by trenching for the electrical lines, FWP will limit digging within 10-15 feet of mature trees.

FWP expects overall vegetative health in areas previously affected by MgCl to improve by not being exposed to continued applications of the chemical.

4c. A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program's (MNHP) species of concern database found two plant species of concern are known to exist along the margins of Salmon Lake. They are Beck water-marigold and pygmy water lily. Both species are aquatic plants and are found in marsh-like areas. There have been no documented observations of these plants at the state park. The proposed projects will not disturb the shoreline of the lake, and thusly not pose a threat to the species if undocumented individual plants exist.

4e. The installation of the pedestals may increase the possibility of noxious weeds becoming established because of the soil disturbing activities, especially along the campground loop. Reseeding disrupted soils after construction will limit the potential for additional weeds by providing competition from a mix of local, native vegetation. Noxious weed control efforts will follow the guidelines presented in the FWP's 2008 Noxious Weed Management Plan, which includes the use of herbicides and mechanical efforts.

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** 5. FISH/WILDLIFE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				5b
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				5c
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				5f
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?		X				5g
h. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f.)		N/A				
i. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d.)		N/A				

5b/c. The proposed project is unlikely to cause any negative impacts to animal species within the park or greater area. However, the proposed action would improve air quality within the project area. Any surface discharge that did occur during the project would be unlikely to affect trout populations within Salmon Lake.

5f. A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Database found there are four mammals and two bird Species of Concern known to be present within the vicinity of the park. Those species are gray wolf, fisher, wolverine, Canadian lynx, bald eagle, and common loon. None of this species are known to use the park because of human presence, but there is the chance bald eagles use the park's mature conifers as perches.

FWP believes none of the Species of Concern will be affected by either proposed project, since their presence in the park in not documented and they will likely avoid the area because of normal human activities.

5g. There may be intermittent and temporary displacement of game and nongame animals due to noise and activity during the three- to four-month construction period. Normal animal movements are expected to return after the construction is completed.

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B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X			6a
b. Exposure of people to serve or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				

6a. There would be a temporary increase in noise level during implementation of the proposed action, but this would end after completion of the project. It is unlikely that any residences would be affected by the noise. Generator noise will be reduced since campers will have the opportunity to use electric power instead of gas-powered generator.

7. LAND USE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. Conflict with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				

There would be no alteration or interference with the existing land use at Salmon Lake State Park.

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8. RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?			X		Yes	8a
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan, or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?			X positive			8c
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)		N/A				

8a/d. There is a slight risk of small petroleum leaks or spills from heavy equipment during the proposed paving project. This risk will be minimized by the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) during all phases of the project.

Chemical spraying is part of FWP's weed management plan to limit the infestation of noxious weeds within the park, which is traditionally completed by a licensed contractor. The licensed professional would conduct weed treatment, and storage and mixing of the chemicals would be in accordance with standard operating procedures.

8c. Besides improving traffic flow and maneuverability, the proposed project would increase available parking within the park, thus reducing the incidence of visitors parking on the shoulder of adjacent Montana Highway 83 during peak visitation times and exposure to traffic hazards.

Providing campers with a choice of using the electrical hookups versus depending upon their generators will reduce the noise impacts to all campers at the park at any given time as well as associated petroleum exhaust problems.

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9. COMMUNITY IMPACT Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?	X					9d
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?			X			9e

9d. There are two known campgrounds in the town of Seeley Lake that offer RV camping with electrical hookups. The first is at the Tamaracks Resort, which is along the shore of Seeley Lake. This resort has 14 campsites offering both electrical and water hookups. Camping rates are $28 per night and $175 per week. The second place in Seeley Lake with an RV park is the Seeley Lake Motor Lodge, which is at the northern edge of town along State Highway 83. The Motor Lodge has 10 sites with electrical hookups. Some of the campsites also have sewer and water hookups. The rate at the lodge's campground is $25 per night and $160 per week.

If the proposed electrification plan for the 23 campsites at Salmon Lake State Park is implemented, the two privately owned campgrounds in Seeley Lake might be affected because campers may choose to stay at the state-owned campgrounds, because of the lower overnight rate charged for the campsite with an electrical hookup ($20) at the park. In addition to the proposed electrification effort at Salmon Lake State Park, FWP is proposing to electrify a portion of campsites at nearby Placid Lake State Park.

The exact effect of electrifying Salmon Lake State Park's campsites on the other RV campgrounds in the Seeley-Swan area is unknown. Prior to the summer of 2008, the Tamaracks Resort was the only area campground offering electrical hookups. Seeley Lake Motor Lodge's campground is a new addition to the business.

University of Montana's Institute of Tourism and Recreation Research survey of traveler characteristics based from April 2007 reflected a slightly higher percentage of the respondents stayed overnight in private campgrounds versus public ones when visiting Missoula Country.

If campers want a higher level of service or additional amenities, park staff will continue to refer those visitors to private campgrounds in the area.

Through the competitive bidding process for services, it is possible that a locally owned electrical business could be chosen for the project, which would support the local economy and residents of the area.

9e. The proposed project would improve traffic flow, maneuverability, and available parking within the park, which would reduce the incidence of visitors parking on the shoulder of Highway 83 and the associated vehicle and pedestrian hazards of the busy state highway.

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10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:		X				
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?			X			10c
d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?			X			10d
e. **Define projected revenue sources						10e
f. **Define projected maintenance costs.						10f

10c. The proposed action will require the installation of new underground electrical conduit lines and new transformers in order to provide electricity to the pedestals.

10d. The proposed electrification of the campground at Salmon Lake State Park is expected to increase the park's consumption of electricity since many visitors will use the new service to power their RVs and peripheral equipment.

10e. If Alternative B is implemented, the park could expect an increase in revenue. The following chart shows the revenue estimates based on different levels of occupancy:

Total public campsites = 23
Number of campsites proposed for electrification: 23
Season: ½ May, June, July, August, ½ September = 120 days

Occupancy at Salmon Lake State Park is often driven by weather conditions. If there is good weather, occupancy averages approximately 70% for the entire season. If conditions are wet and cool, the average occupancy for the entire season is closer to 25%.

Occupancy (#of days x # of campsites x camp fee with hook up)		Less Cost of Electricity	Gross Revenue
70%	(120 days)(23 sites)($20/night) = $38,640	-$ 7,728	$30,912
25%	(120 days)(23 sites)($20/night) = $13,800	-$ 2,760	$11,040

* Assume $4 cost of electricity per night, first year

10f. Under the preferred Alternative B, the project would eliminate the need for road grading and dust abatement within the Park, and short-term maintenance costs would be sharply reduced. In 10-15 years some pavement maintenance would likely be necessary. Alternatives with less projected paving would necessarily continue to require substantial yearly road maintenance.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

The life spans of the pedestals are anticipated to be 50-years with normal wear and maintenance based on FWP's experience of the existing campground host pad pedestals and other outdoor electrical outlets.

**** 11. AESTHETICS/RECREATION** **Will the proposed action result in:**	**IMPACT ***				**Can Impact Be Mitigated ***	**Comment Index**
	Unknown *	**None**	**Minor ***	**Potentially Significant**		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. **Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report.)			X			11c
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c.)		X				

11c. The proposed action will improve the quality of the aesthetics and recreational experience for many visitors to Salmon Lake State Park. Surfacing the road will greatly decrease dust, improving the visitor experience at the park. However, the proposed project is not expected to significantly increase day-use of the park, which is already at capacity most summer weekends. Overnight visitation in the campground would likely increase as a result of the improvements, as it did after the roads were paved in Placid Lake State Park in 2006. See *Appendix B* for the Tourism Report.

The installation of the proposed electrical pedestals and paving will likely occur when the park is closed to campers and other visitors at the end of the tourist season, which will eliminate any inconveniences to visitors by the construction equipment.

12. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES **Will the proposed action result in:**	**IMPACT ***				**Can Impact Be Mitigated ***	**Comment Index**
	Unknown *	**None**	**Minor ***	**Potentially Significant**		
a. **Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?	X					12a.
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a.)		N/A				

12a. FWP's Heritage Resource Manager will complete a cultural resource survey prior to the implementation of the proposed improvements and consult with the State Historic Preservation Office as necessary. If any previously unrecorded, culturally sensitive areas are discovered, the manager will work with the electrical engineers and park manager to design the conduit's path around those areas to decrease additional disturbances.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE **Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:**	**IMPACT ***				**Can Impact Be Mitigated ***	**Comment Index**
	Unknown *	**None**	**Minor ***	**Potentially Significant**		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources that create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. ***For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e.)		N/A				
g. ****For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		N/A				

This EA found no significant impacts to the human or physical environment from the proposed action. Some public debate is anticipated.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

2. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

Final plans and specifications for the project will be developed by a state-appointed engineering consultant in conjunction with FWP engineering staff. A private contractor selected through the State's competitive bid process will complete construction. Final inspection will be the responsibility of the FWP Design and Construction Bureau.

State pesticide use laws and regulations will be followed. Application records will be submitted to the Montana Department of Agriculture as required every five-years and these records will be available to state investigators upon request.

PART IV. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

This EA did not reveal any significant negative impacts to the physical and human environment stemming from the proposed action. It is unlikely that any threatened or endangered species would be affected, and no unique or physical features would be disturbed. The proposed action would benefit visitors to Salmon Lake State Park by improving the ease and safety of vehicular travel within the Park, in addition to providing a more positive recreational experience. Providing the option of electrical service at the Park's campsites would cater to the requests of visitors and reduce noise from generators. Disruption of wildlife, recreation, and other public uses at Salmon Lake State Park would be temporary and will occur off-season. Following the completion of the project, resource impacts would likely be minimized through better-defined roadways that aid in preventing user-pioneered road and parking areas, generating less road-dust particulates into the air, and discontinuing use of dust abatement chemicals.

The proposed project would improve public health, safety, and comfort within in the park and environmental resources would be better protected. In short, the proposed project would considerably increase visitor enjoyment of Salmon Lake State Park without causing adverse affects to the environment.

PART V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Public involvement:

The public will be notified in the following manners to comment on this current EA, the proposed action and alternatives:

- Public notices in each of these papers: *Helena Independent Record and the Missoulian;*
- One statewide press release;
- Public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page: *http://fwp.mt.gov.*
- If requested, FWP would conduct a public meeting on this proposal.

Copies of this environmental assessment or notice of its availability will be distributed to interested parties to ensure their knowledge of the proposed project. Copies will be available for pubic review at FWP Region 2 Headquarters. If requested, FWP will hold a public meeting on the proposal.

This level of public notice and participation is appropriate for a project of this scope having few minor impacts for the enhancements to the campground.

2. Duration of comment period:
The public comment period will extend for thirty (30) days following the publication of the legal notice in area newspapers. Written comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on August 10, 2009 and can be mailed to the address below:

Salmon Lake State Park Improvement Project
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
3201 Spurgin Road
Missoula, MT 59804

Or email comments to: Lee Bastian at lbastian@mt.gov or to Chris Lorentz at clorentz@mt.gov

PART VI. EA PREPARATION

1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? No
If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.

Based on an evaluation of the primary, secondary, and cumulative impacts to the physical and human environment under the Montana Environmental Protection Act (MEPA), this environmental review found no significant impacts from the proposed project. In determining the significance of the impacts, FWP assessed the severity, duration, geographic extent, and frequency of the impact; the probability that the impact would occur or reasonable assurance that the impact would not occur; growth-inducing or growth-inhibiting aspects of the impact; the importance to the state and to society of the environmental resource or value affected; precedent that would be set as a result of the proposed action that would commit FWP to future actions; and potential conflicts with local, federal, or state laws. Therefore, an EA is the appropriate level of review and an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

2. Persons responsible for preparing the EA:

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Park Manager
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Rebecca Cooper
MEPA Coordinator
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(406) 444-4756

3. List of agencies consulted during preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks:

Design & Construction Bureau	Fisheries Division
Legal Bureau	Parks Division
Wildlife Division	

Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
Montana Department of Commerce – Tourism
Montana Natural Heritage Program – Natural Resources Information System (NRIS)

Appendices

A. Preliminary Concept Map of the Campground at Salmon Lake State Park
B. MT Department of Commerce Tourism Report
C. HB495 Checklist